

31ST FIGHTER WING

HERITAGE PHAMPLET

AVIANO AIR BASE, ITALY



1947 - 2000

31ST FIGHTER WING HISTORY OFFICE

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Cover: The beautiful 31st Fighter Wing lithograph belongs to the 31st Fighter Wing Enlisted Heritage Organization. They can be reached at DSN 632-4708 or commercial (0434) 664708.

PREFACE

The world looks to the new millennium. This unclassified pamphlet looks back into the rich history of the 31st Fighter Wing - 52 plus years of history. This Heritage Pamphlet is designed to introduce members of the 31st Fighter Wing, and other interested parties, to the lineage and honors, significant accomplishments, and organizational development of the wing. The pamphlet should quickly provide the reader with some of the most requested information, and to some extent, a detailed account of the history, lineage, and honors of the 31st Fighter Wing. For additional information on wing history, contact the 31st Fighter Wing History Office, TSgt Brandon S. Lindsay at DSN 632-7609.

For further reading on the history of the 31st Fighter Wing, the following titles are suggested and are available at the Aviano Library and the wing History Office:

Center for Air Force History, Air Force Bases Outside the United States, (Washington, 1993).

Air Force Office of History, Air Force Combat Medals, Streamers, and Campaigns, (Washington, 1990).

Air Force Office of History, Air Force Combat Units of World War II, (Washington, 1961).

Air Force Office of History, Air Force Combat Wings, Lineage and Honors Histories 1947 - 1977, (Washington, 1984).

Air Force Office of History, Combat Squadrons of the Air Force in World War II, (Washington, 1969).

Special Thanks to 16th Air Force Historian, Ms. Carol Parks and former 31 FW Historian, MSgt (Ret.) George Strader.

People make history!

As with other historical writings and studies, this Heritage Phamplet is subject to revision, additional information and/or corrections.

AVIANO AB, ITALY



Located in and around the town of Aviano, Aviano Air Base (AB) is situated in the north-central portion of the province of Pordenone and located approximately 50 miles NNE of Venice, Italy. The second largest employer in the Pordenone Province, the base encompasses more than 1,363 acres of land and employs over 5,000 people.

BRIEF HISTORY OF AVIANO AIR BASE

Aviano Air Base history pre-dates the United States Air Force (USAF), going back to the earliest days of Italian military aviation. Aviano Air Base (AB), along with Campofornido Airfield, located 30 miles east in the suburbs of Udine, and Merna Airfield, located 50 miles east, just outside the town of Gorizia, share the distinction as the “Cradle of the Italian Air Force”.

Italy established the air base in 1911 and in 1912 started a flying training school. During World War I, Italy used the airfield in missions against the Austro-German armies. Italian aviators, Captain Maurizio Pagliano and Lieutenant Luigi Gori, conducted an unauthorized, but heroic and successful air raid on the Austrian naval yards in Pola, Yugoslavia (then under Austrian rule) during the war. This 10 May 1916 raid earned both men immediate status as national heroes. The two aviators later died while flying strafing missions in a tri-motored Caproni biplane bomber in May 1917. In their honor, the base was officially changed to “Aeroporto Pagliano e Gori” in 1919. Between the world wars, Aviano served as a training and operational base that housed both fighter and bomber squadrons.

During World War II, both the Italian Air Force and the German *Luftwaffe* flew missions from Aviano. In the later stages of the war, allied bombings severely damaged the base (specifically B-17 and B-24 bombers and P-51 and P-38 fighters). The British captured the base in 1945 and conducted air operations until 1947. The base sustained so much damage during continual allied air raids, it required several to bring the base back to operational status.

After the war and British departure in 1947, the Italian Air Force resumed operational use of Aviano AB. In 1954, the U.S. and Italian governments signed a joint use agreement that brought Aviano into the family of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) bases. Headquarters United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE) officially activated the base on 15 February 1955. In March 1955, an advanced party from Detachment 1 of Headquarters 17th Air Force, augmented by the 629th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron, moved to Aviano from Campofornido Airfield and activated as the 7207th Air Base Squadron. On 19 December, the first rotational flying squadron, the 390th Fighter-Bomber Squadron, with its F-84 *Thunderstreaks*, landed on the newly built runway and by Christmas Eve 1955, Aviano was fully operational.

On 1 July 1957, the 7227th Support Group moved from Udine to Aviano and combined with the 7207th to form the 7227th Combat Support Group (officially changed to 7227th on 1 July 1962). On 1 April 1966, the 40th Tactical Group activated at Aviano and replaced the 7227th. On 30 July 1990, the USAF redesignated the group the 40th Tactical Support Wing (TSW) and then on 4 May 1992, USAFE moved the 401st Fighter Wing and the first permanent F-16s to Aviano from Torrejon AB, Spain. The 40th TSW inactivated. On 1 April 1994, the 401st inactivated and the 31st Fighter

Wing transferred its colors, Lineage and Honors from Homestead Air Force Base (AFB), Florida and moved to Aviano AB.

HISTORY OF THE 31st FIGHTER WING

The 31st Fighter Wing has maintained a long and proud historical past and an outstanding record of service to the United States and the Air Force. Among its many accomplishments, the wing earned the first Outstanding Unit Award in the history of the Air Force. Although assigned an air defense mission in the southeastern United States for much of its history, the wing has had many distinguished accomplishments overseas. It deployed to Japan during the Korean War, fought in Vietnam, and played a major role in the air operations that brought the warring factions in the Balkans to the peace table in 1995.

The wing is proud to share honors with a distinguished World War II combat unit, the 31st Fighter Group. The wing and group are two separate organizations, and it is important to remember that the wing did not evolve from the group, which exists today as the 31st Operations Group. It may seem odd that two units can share the same combat honors. However, it is the result of organizational changes in the Air Force in the late 1940s and 1950s. After the Second World War, the new US Air Force inactivated the World War II combat groups, and activated combat wings. To preserve the combat honors earned by the groups, the Air Force allowed wings with the same numerical designation to share those honors. Due to this policy, the 31st Fighter Wing received the bestowed honors of the 31st Fighter Group. The achievements of the 31st Fighter Group are chronicled in this short history not for lineage purposes, but to preserve the history of the group and document the honors it has earned.

THE 31st FIGHTER GROUP World War II

The 31st Fighter Group was activated on 1 February 1940 as the 31st Pursuit Group (Interceptor) at Selfridge Field, Michigan. The group's three operational squadrons, the 39th, 40th and 41st Pursuit Squadrons, conducted interceptor training in the P-35, and P-39 aircraft.

In September 1941, the group moved first to Baer Field, Indiana, and then to New Orleans Air Base, Louisiana, and continued interceptor training. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, and anticipating Japanese threats in the Pacific, the War Department removed the three squadrons from the group and dispatched them to the west coast. The group then received the 307th, 308th, and 309th Pursuit Squadrons as replacements in January 1942.

The group, redesignated the 31st Fighter Group (FG) in May 1942, sailed to England in June and began preparations for combat operations. The group arrived at Atcham Air Base near Shopshire, England, as the first US pursuit group in the United

Kingdom, and while assigned to Eighth Air Force, began training in the British *Spitfire*. In August 1942, the group's three squadrons received combat training while attached to the Royal Air Forces, Number 11th Group. On 19 August 1942, Second Lieutenant Samuel Junkin, 308th Fighter Squadron, engaged and shot down a German Focke-Wulf 190, and earned distinction as the first American to shoot down a German aircraft in the European Theater.

In preparation for the invasion of North Africa, the 31 FG moved to Gibraltar on 26 October 1942, and received new *Spitfires* (V-B Desert models). During the North African campaign, the group flew 804 missions, destroyed 51 enemy aircraft and damaged 58 more with a loss of only 29 *Spitfires*.

In May 1943, the 31 FG entered the Mediterranean theater of operations and prepared for the invasion of Sicily, Italy, and southern France. During this time, the group conducted strafing and escort missions and provided ground support for the allied landings at Salerno in September 1943 and Anzio, Italy, in January 1944.

In April 1944, the 31 FG replaced the *Spitfire* with the P-51 *Mustang*. Between April 1944 and May 1945, while assigned to 15th Air Force, the group provided fighter protection for B-17 and B-24 heavy bombers in their strikes against strategic targets. During this phase of the war, the 31 FG earned two Distinguished Unit Citations. The group received its first citation, 21 April 1944, for participating in the oil field raids over Ploesti, Romania. The group received its second citation, 25 July 1944, after the 31st conducted combat operations in Russia and Poland, downing 37 enemy fighters without losing a single aircraft.

Throughout the rest of the war the 31 FG continued to achieve successes. The Germans introduced the new ME-262 jet fighter late into the war. Lieutenant Eugene P. McGlaufflin of the 31 FG, flying the P-51 *Mustang*, achieved the distinction as the first American to down the German jet in the Mediterranean theater. By the end of the war, the 31 FG destroyed a total of 570 enemy aircraft, becoming the highest scoring fighter group in the Mediterranean theater of operations and earned 14 campaign streamers and two Distinguished Unit Citations.

Post World War II

Following the war, the 31 FG was inactivated at Drew Field, Florida, on 7 November 1945. Less than a year later, the group was activated once again, 20 August 1946, in Giebelstadt, Germany, and served as part of the occupational forces flying the P-80 *Shooting Star*. On 25 June 1947, the 31 FG transferred without personnel and equipment to Langley Field, Virginia, and on 4 September 1947, moved to Turner Field, Georgia.

31st Fighter Group Activated as the 31st Operations Group

During World War II, the Army Air Forces organized their basic combat elements into groups. The organization of combat elements changed in 1947 after the newly established US Air Force adopted the wing as the basic combat element. The Air Force then established wings with the same numerical designation as the groups of World War II. On 6 November 1947, the Air Force established the 31st Fighter Wing at Turner Field, Georgia. The 31st Fighter Group became subordinate and attached to the 31st Fighter Wing on 20 November 1947, and continued training operations flying the P-51 *Mustang*. On 27 July 1951, the 31st Fighter Group's three squadrons, the 307th, 308th, and 309th, were assigned to the 31st Fighter Wing. The 31st Fighter Group was inactivated on 16 June 1952 and remained inactive until 1 November 1991, when it was activated as the 31st Operations Group.

THE 31st FIGHTER WING

The 31st Fighter Wing, was established on 6 November 1947, flew the P/F-51 *Mustang*, and in August 1948, converted to the F-84 *Thunderjet*, while assigned to Tactical Air Command and stationed at Turner Field, Georgia. The wing changed designations to the 31st Fighter-Bomber Wing on 20 January 1950, and was reassigned to the Strategic Air Command on 1 July 1950. Fifteen days later the 31st Fighter Wing again changed designations to the 31st Fighter Escort Wing.

The wing made aviation history on 22 September 1950, when Colonel David Schilling, wing commander, flew an F-84E from Manston, England to Limestone, Maine, in 10 hours and one minute. He earned distinction as the first pilot to fly non-stop across the Atlantic Ocean in a jet aircraft and received the Harmon Trophy for this feat.

On 26 December 1950, following the outbreak of the Korean War, the wing moved to Manston, England, for a six-month temporary duty tour, providing fighter escort for bombardment units operating from the United Kingdom. During this same period, the 31st converted from F-84Es to F-84Gs.

The wing played a leading role in the development of in-flight refueling tactics and the demonstration of the long-range capabilities of jet fighters. On 4 July 1952, the entire 31st Fighter Escort Wing executed Operation FOX PETER ONE, the first and longest, non-stop, air-to-air refueling, jet flight in history. The wing flew from Turner Field, Georgia, to Misawa Air Base, Japan, in the first Trans-Pacific mass flight of jet aircraft. For its accomplishments, the 31st received the first ever Air Force Outstanding Unit Award.

On 20 January 1953, the wing's name changed to the 31st Strategic Fighter Wing. Four years later, on 1 April 1957, the wing, redesignated the 31st Fighter-

Bomber Wing, transferred from Strategic Air Command to the Tactical Air Command. During this same time, the wing converted from F-84s to the F-100 *Super Sabre*. On 1 July 1958, the wing's name changed once again, to the 31st Tactical Fighter Wing.

Cuban Missile Crisis

On 15 March 1959, the wing moved, without personnel and equipment, from Turner Field, Georgia, to George Air Force Base, California. Three years later, the wing moved to a new home, Homestead AFB, Florida, on 1 June 1962, and played a key role in the Cuban Missile Crisis in October of that same year. Throughout the crisis, the wing maintained constant air defense alert. For its critical role, the wing received its second Air Force Outstanding Unit Award on 10 May 1963.

On 8 February 1964, the 31st Tactical Fighter Wing's 308th Tactical Fighter Squadron flew nonstop from Homestead AFB, Florida, to Cigli Air Base, Turkey, in 11 hours and 30 minutes. The wing received the Tactical Air Command's Outstanding Fighter Wing Award for 1964, for this longest mass flight (6,000 miles) of jet aircraft across the Atlantic.

Vietnam War

On 24 June 1965, the wing's 307th Tactical Fighter Squadron deployed to Bien Hoa Air Base, Republic of Vietnam, to augment US forces. During its six-month tour, the squadron flew 3,502 F-100 missions without a single combat loss. The 308th replaced the 307th in December 1965. For outstanding service in Vietnam from 1 June to 16 December 1966, the wing received its third Air Force Outstanding Unit Award on 11 May 1967. On 25 December 1966, the entire 31st Tactical Fighter Wing transferred to Tuy Hoa Air Base, Vietnam, assigned to Seventh Air Force, Pacific Air Forces. From February to April 1968, the wing provided extensive air support during the TET Offensive and the siege of Khe Sanh. For exceptional combat service in Vietnam from 17 December 1966 to 30 April 1968, the 31FW received an Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with combat a "V" device.

The wing returned to Homestead AFB on 15 October 1970 and converted from the F-100 to the F-4 *Phantom*. On 28 April 1972, the 308th Tactical Fighter Squadron deployed on temporary duty to Udorn Royal Thai Air Base, Thailand, in support of Operation CONSTANT GUARD II. On 13 July 1972, the 307th replaced the 308th and recorded its first air victory on 15 October, when two crewmembers shot down a MiG-21 northeast of Hanoi. From 11 December 1972 to 11 June 1973, the 308th deployed to Udorn Royal Thai Air Base, Thailand, in continued support of Operation CONSTANT GUARD II. For outstanding service during the Vietnam War, the wing earned numerous awards including: 10 Vietnam Service Medal campaign streamers, a Presidential Unit Citation, an Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with a combat "V"

device, an Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, and two Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Awards.

Post Vietnam History

By 11 June 1973, with Vietnam commitments over, the wing resumed training operations. On 30 March 1981, the wing, redesignated the 31st Tactical Training Wing, continued training aircrews in the F-4. On 7 June 1985, the wing received their first F-16B *Falcon*. Four months later, on 1 October 1985, the wing returned to its prior designation, the 31st Tactical Fighter Wing. In March 1991, the wing converted from the F-16A/B to the Block 40 F-16C/D models. On 1 October 1991, the wing returned to its original designation, the 31FW. On 24 August 1992, Hurricane Andrew severely damaged and destroyed much of Homestead AFB. Due to the damage sustained, the Secretary of the Air Force recommended the closure of Homestead AFB during the 1993 round of base closures and realignments. As a result of this recommendation, the 31st was relieved of its assignment to Air Combat Command at Homestead AFB on 31 March 1994.

On 1 April 1994, the 31FW transferred to USAFE, was assigned to Sixteenth Air Force, and moved to its current home, at Aviano AB, Italy. The wing received two new fighter squadrons, the 510th and 555th, flying the F-16C/D *Falcon*. The 31st replaced the 401FW and provided support to Sixteenth Air Force installations located throughout the Southern Region of Europe.

On-Going Contingencies Since 1994

The 31st Fighter Wing's new mission centered on efforts to contain the civil war in Yugoslavia. On 31 March 1993, the United Nations (UN) Security Council passed Resolution 816, beginning a UN and NATO military action in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The wing's role in this peacekeeping mission consisted of a series of air operations: DENY FLIGHT, DELIBERATE FORCE, DECISIVE EDGE, DELIBERATE GUARD, and DELIBERATE FORGE.

One month after arriving at Aviano AB, the wing began flying contingency operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In May 1994, the 31 FW's 555 FS started operations in support of Operation DENY FLIGHT, and by September of the same year, the 510th joined her sister squadron. Both squadrons conducted daily sorties with other NATO forces, enforcing the "No Fly Zone" over the region. By 28 August 1995, the wing had flown 1,644 sorties in support of Operation DENY FLIGHT.

On 2 June 1995, Bosnian Serb forces shot down Air Force Captain Scott O'Grady, a 555th Fighter Squadron F-16 pilot, behind enemy lines. Captain O'Grady spent the next six days evading Bosnian Serb forces by moving during the night and

hiding during the day. Finally, on 8 June, a Marine Corps, 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit, rescued Captain O'Grady unharmed and he returned home to a hero's welcome.

On 29 August 1995, in response to the Bosnian Serb's shelling of Sarajevo's central market, NATO initiated Operation DELIBERATE FORCE. This military action resulted in the largest air assault in NATO's history. The 31 FW increased its involvement and support to NATO forces during this 23-day operation, flying an average of 18 sorties a day for a total of 418 sorties. After reducing the threat to Sarajevo and other UN safe havens, NATO and the UN ended Operation DELIBERATE FORCE on 21 September 1995.

On 21 September 1995, with the completion of Operation DELIBERATE FORCE, Operation DENY FLIGHT resumed. The wing continued daily missions to enforce the "No Fly Zone" over Bosnia-Herzegovina, and by 20 December 1995, had flown a total of 303 sorties. On 15 December 1995, the UN Security Council Resolution 816 expired and with it authority for Operation DENY FLIGHT. The UN agreed to terminate the operation and officially turned over authority for the security of Bosnia-Herzegovina to the NATO Implementation Force (IFOR) on 20 December 1995.

On 20 December 1995, NATO's IFOR began Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR. The air portion of this mission, called Operation DECISIVE EDGE, ensured Aviano based aircraft continued to maintain the security of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The 31 FW continued daily flights over the area and, as of 20 December 1996, had flown a total of 1,088 sorties for this operation.

On 20 December 1996, Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR concluded and NATO forces began operating under Operation JOINT GUARD. This new NATO operation also affected the air mission, which changed from Operation DECISIVE EDGE to Operation DELIBERATE GUARD. This new operation implemented by NATO's Stabilization Forces (SFOR, previously IFOR), became one of stabilization to give civilian agencies the opportunity and time to become functional and operational. The 31 FW continued to fly sorties in support of SFOR requirements, and by the end of Operation DELIBERATE GUARD, 20 June 1998, had flown a total of 1,632 sorties in these ongoing peacekeeping efforts. On 20 June 1998, peacekeeping efforts in Bosnia-Herzegovina continued under Operation DELIBERATE FORGE. For a sortie breakdown of all operations see page 13.

Operation ALLIED FORCE

On 19 February 1999, the 31 FW activated as the 31st Air Expeditionary Wing-NOBLE ANVIL (AEW). Assigned under a Joint Task Force, the 31AEW flew from Aviano and joined with NATO allies and conducted a 78-day air campaign against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia). Aviano units, already in place, received nearly 200 additional aircraft and 4,000 additional personnel.

From 24 March – 10 June 1999, the 31 AEW at Aviano, flew in Operation ALLIED FORCE (OAF). The largest expeditionary wing in air force history flew nearly 9,000 combat sorties and accumulated almost 40,000 hours of combat service over the skies of Kosovo, Serbia, and all throughout the Balkan region in support of NATO operations.

With zero combat losses, the wing accomplished much during OAF as the two permanently assigned flying squadrons, the 510 FS and 555 FS, combined for nearly 2,400 sorties over 10,000 combat hours. Additionally, as the first Aviano OAF squadrons to fly 1,000 combat sorties, 555 FS reached the 1,000 combat sortie mark on 27 May 1999 and the 510 FS followed suit two days later. Simply, the 31 FW operators, maintainers, and supporters proudly accomplished the NATO mission.

With deployments as the multi-role fighter contingent in an AEF on the horizon, the 31st Fighter Wing continues a proud tradition started on 6 November 1947. That tradition of establishing historic firsts and providing the highest professional service to our country and our allies has enabled the 31st Fighter Wing to “Return With Honor.”

31st FIGHTER WING BALKAN TIMELINE
(AVIANO AB OPERATIONS)
January 2000

OPERATION	31 FW SORTIES	DATES
<u>DENY FLIGHT</u> -	1,644	14 May 94 - 28 Aug 95
<u>DELIBERATE FORCE</u> -	418	29 Aug - 21 Sep 95
<u>DENY FLIGHT</u> -	303	21 Sep - 20 Dec 95
<u>JOINT ENDEAVOR</u> - IFOR Operations in Bosnia		5 Dec 95 - 20 Dec 96
<u>DECISIVE EDGE</u> -	1,088	21 Dec 95 - 20 Dec 96
<u>JOINT GUARD</u> - SFOR Operations in Bosnia		20 Dec 96 – 20 Jun 98
<u>DELIBERATE GUARD</u> –	1,632	20 Dec 96 – 20 Jun 98
<u>JOINT FORGE</u> - Follow on to Joint Guard		20 Jun 98 – PRESENT
<u>DELIBERATE FORGE</u> -	1,575	20 Jun 98 - PRESENT
<u>ALLIED FORCE/NOBLE ANVIL</u>	2,403	24 Mar – 10 Jun 99

31st FIGHTER WING in Operation NORTHERN WATCH (Turkey)

<u>NORTHERN WATCH</u>	210	1 Oct – 31 Dec 98
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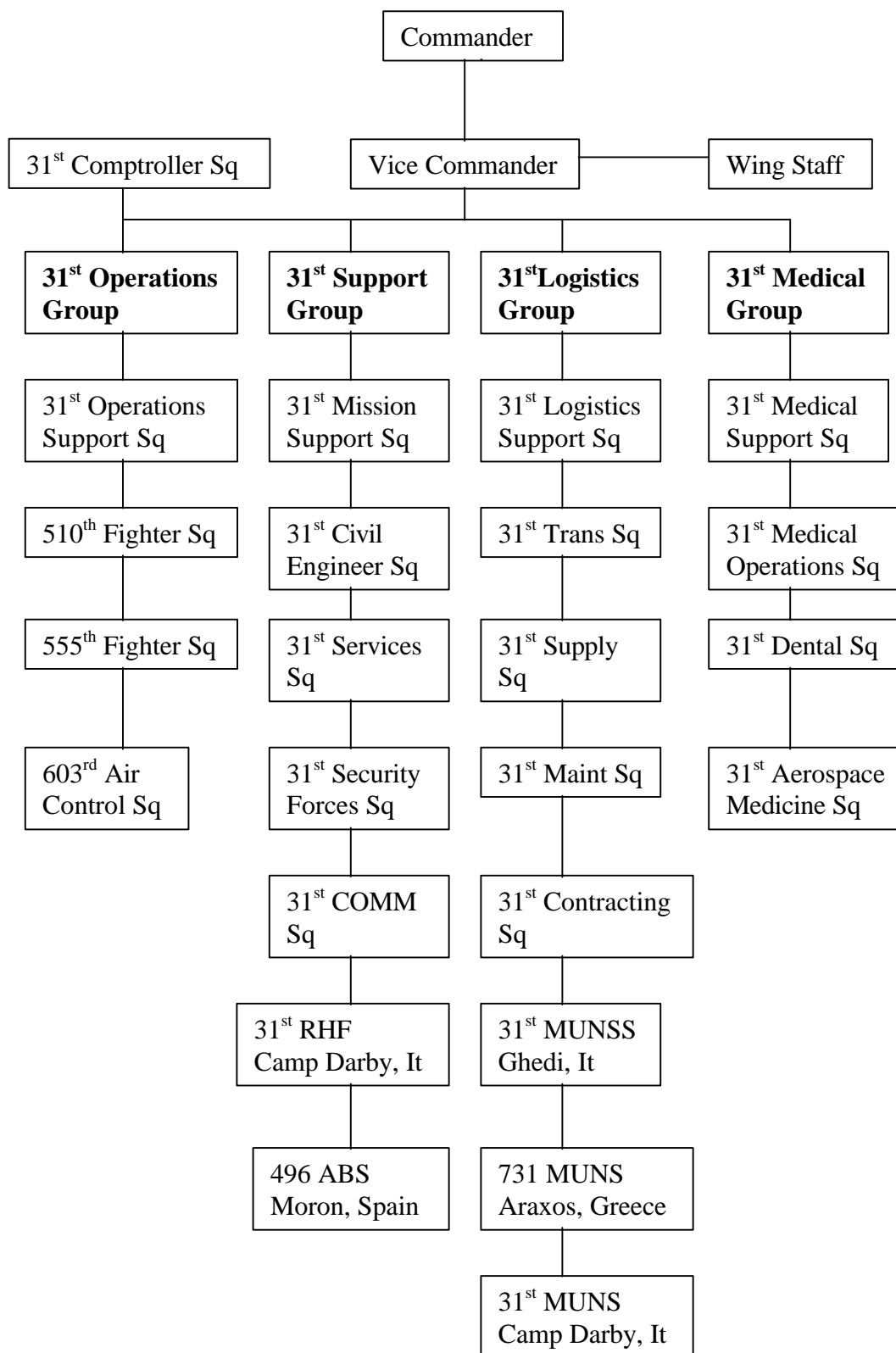
WING MISSION STATEMENT

The 31st Fighter Wing maintained its role as the only United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE) combat wing permanently stationed south of the Alps. In order to conduct daily operations, the wing utilized a mission statement unchanged since 25 October 1995 reflecting the wing's unique responsibilities:

Conducts combat and support operations in Southern Region. Maintains the capability to conduct air combat operations with two F-16 Low Altitude Night Targeting Infrared Navigation (LANTIRN) capable squadrons in counter air missions, close air support, air interdiction, airborne forward air control and offensive missions of strategic nature through assigned forces in support of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and United States operations. Operates and maintains a theater air control system to provide mobile offensive and defensive radar control, air surveillance and air space management. Supports tactical and strategic airlift operations. Provides weather support for flying operations. Maintains active liaison with Italian representatives.

The 31st Fighter Wing supported national security objectives with two fully trained F-16 fighter squadrons, the 510th and 555th, capable of conducting offensive and defensive air combat operations under NATO and the Supreme Allied Commander Europe. The 603rd Air Control Squadron (ACS) provided the wing with command and control functions, air surveillance and communications. In an emergency, USAFE, AIRSOUTH, or the Balkan Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC) would task the 31 FW to support operations.

ORGANIZATION CHART
As of January 2000



Wing Emblem



WING EMBLEM: Per bend nebule Or and Azure, in chief a wyvern Light Blue, sans legs, wings endorsed of the second, all within a diminished bordure of the first.

APPROVAL DATE: For 31st Group on 28 Jun 1941 and for 31st Fighter Wing on 13 December 1951.

SIGNIFICANCE: The shield is divided per bend in the colors of the Air Force. The partition line is the heraldic symbol for clouds. In the chief or upper portion of the shield is placed a wyvern without legs, the wings endorsed. The wyvern is a strong and fierce mythical animal that may symbolize the overthrow of a vicious enemy. It is shown without legs to indicate that all of the wing's work is in the air and is made in blue to contrast against the gold background of the shield.

MOTTO: RETURN WITH HONOR

**CHRONOLOGY OF THE
31st FIGHTER GROUP and 31st FIGHTER WING
1940 – 2000**

31ST Fighter Group

1 February 1940	31 st Pursuit Group (Interceptor) activated at Selfridge Field, Michigan.
20 October 1940	The 41 st Pursuit Squadron joined the 39 th and 40 th as the three tactical flying squadrons of the 31 st Pursuit Group flying the P-39 <i>Airacobra</i> and P-40 <i>Warhawk</i> .
September 1941	The 31 st Pursuit Group assigned to Baer Field, Indiana.
January 1942	Due to the attack on Pearl Harbor, the 39 th , 40 th , and 41 st Pursuit Squadrons transferred to the 35 th Pursuit Group while, simultaneously the 307 th , 308 th , and the 309 th Pursuit Squadrons assigned to the 31 st Pursuit Group.
May 1942	The 31 st Pursuit Group redesignated the 31 st Fighter Group.
12 June 1942	The 31 st Fighter Group sent overseas to Atcham Air Base, England, and began training in the British-built <i>Spitfire</i> .
19 August 1942	Lieutenant Samuel F. Junkin, 307 th Fighter Squadron, shot down a Focke-Wulf 190 and received the distinction as the first American pilot to shoot down a German aircraft in operations from the British Isles.
April 1944	The 31 st Fighter Group converted from the British <i>Spitfire</i> to the faster P-51 <i>Mustang</i> .
21 April 1944	The Group received a Distinguished Unit Citation for providing cover for a force of heavy bombers during a raid on oil production centers in Ploesti-Bucharest, Romania, despite severe weather.
25 July 1944	The 31 st Fighter Group escorted P-38's from a base in Russia on a strafing mission against the Mialec Airdrome in Poland. The group encountered and attacked a convoy of German trucks and a force of German fighter-bombers and earned a second Distinguished Unit Citation.
October 1945	The 31 st Fighter Group returned to the United States.

31st FIGHTER WING HISTORY

7 November 1945	The 31 st inactivated at Drew Field, Florida.
20 August 1946	The 31 st Fighter Group activated at Geibelstadt, Germany, serving as part of the occupational forces, flying the P-80 <i>Shooting Star</i> .
25 July 1947	The 31 st Fighter Group transferred to Langley Field, Virginia, and assigned to Tactical Air Command.
4 September 1947	The group moved without personnel and equipment to Turner Field, Georgia.
<u>31st Fighter Wing</u>	
6 Nov 1947	The 31 st Fighter Wing was established.
20 Nov 1947	The 31 st Fighter Wing organized at Turner Field, Georgia. Simultaneously, the 31 st Fighter Group assigned to the wing, with its 307 th , 308 th , and 309 th Fighter Squadrons, flying the F-51 <i>Mustang</i> .
23 August 1948	The wing converted to F-84C <i>Thunderjet</i> .
20 Jan 1950	The Air Force redesignated 31 st Fighter Wing the 31 st Fighter- Bomber Wing.
16 Jul 1950	The Air Force redesignated 31st Fighter-Bomber Wing the 31 st Fighter Escort Wing.
22 Sep 1950	Colonel David C. Schilling, commander of the 31 st Fighter Escort Wing, flew an F-84 from England to Limestone, Maine (3,300 miles) in 10 hours and one minute. The first non-stop jet flight to cross the Atlantic earned Colonel Schilling the coveted Harmon Trophy for 1950.
16 June 1952	The 31 st Fighter Group reduced to paper status and inactivated, simultaneously, the 307 th , 308 th , and 309 th Fighter Squadrons removed from the group and attached to the 31 st Fighter Escort Wing.
4 Jul – 22 Oct 1952	The entire 31 st Fighter Escort Wing flew from Turner Field, Georgia to Misawa Air Base, Japan. The 62

31st FIGHTER WING HISTORY

	F-84Cs flew non-stop and marked the first trans-Pacific mass flight of jet aircraft.
20 Jan 1953	The 31 st Fighter Escort Wing was redesignated the 31 st Strategic Fighter Wing.
20 Aug 1953	Colonel David C. Schilling, commander of the 31 st Strategic Fighter Wing, led a flight of eight F-84 <i>Thunderjets</i> non-stop from Turner Field, Georgia, to Nauasseur Air Base, French Morocco, in 10 hours and 23 minutes, earning the Mackay Trophy for 1953.
1 Mar 1954	The 31 st Strategic Fighter Wing received the first Air Force Outstanding Unit Award ever presented for its mass flight from Turner Field, Georgia to Misawa Air Base (AB), Japan.
11 May 1956	The 508 th Air Refueling Squadron was assigned to the wing flying the KB-29.
1 Apr 1957	The 31 st Strategic Fighter Wing was redesignated the 31 st Fighter-Bomber Wing and converted from the F-84 <i>Thunderjet</i> to the F-100C <i>Super Sabre</i> .
25 Sep 1957	The 306 th Fighter-Bomber Squadron activated and joined the 307 th , 308 th , and 309 th Fighter-Bomber Squadrons of the 31 st Fighter-Bomber Wing.
1 Jul 1958	The 31 st Fighter-Bomber Wing was redesignated the 31 st Tactical Fighter Wing.
15 Mar 1959	The 31 st Tactical Fighter Wing moved from Turner Field, Georgia, to George Air Force Base (AFB), California.
Apr – Nov 1960	The 306 th and 309 th Tactical Fighter Squadrons deployed temporary duty to Aviano AB, Italy.
1 Jun 1962	The 31 st Tactical Fighter Wing transferred from George AFB, California to Homestead AFB, Florida.
Oct – Dec 1962	The wing planned for and participated in the Cuban Missile Crisis, by standing alert.

31st FIGHTER WING HISTORY

10 May 1963	The 31 st Tactical Fighter Wing received its second Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for its participation in the Cuban Missile Crisis.
25 Dec 1966	The 31 st Tactical Fighter Wing transferred, permanent change of station, to Tuy Hoa AB, Vietnam.
11 May 1967	The 31 st Tactical Fighter Wing received its third Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for service while stationed at Homestead AFB, Florida.
Feb – Apr 1968	The wing conducted air operations against enemy forces during the TET Offensive and the Siege of Khe Sanh.
6 Mar 1969	The 31 st Tactical Fighter Wing received an Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Combat “V” Device for service in Vietnam from 17 Dec 1966 – 30 Apr 1968.
12 Sep 1969	The wing flew its 100,000 th combat sortie in Southeast Asia.
9 Dec 1969	The 31 st Tactical Fighter Wing received the Presidential Unit Citation Award for participation in Vietnam from 1 May – 31 Dec 1968.
15 Oct 1970	The wing transferred from Tuy Hoa AB, Vietnam back to Homestead AFB, Florida and converted from the F-100 to the F-4E <i>Phantom</i> .
1 Apr 1970	The 31 st Tactical Fighter Wing assumed responsibility for providing air defense in Southern Florida.
Sep 1979 – Sep 1980	The wing moved half of its F-4E <i>Phantoms</i> to Egypt as part of Project PEACE PHAROAH and re-equipped with F-4D aircraft.
30 Mar 1981	The 31 st Tactical Fighter Wing redesignated the 31 st Tactical Training Wing.
7 Jun 1985	The wing converted from the F-4 <i>Phantom</i> to the F-16 <i>Falcon</i> .
1 Oct 1985	The 31 st Tactical Training Wing redesignated the 31 st Tactical Fighter Wing.

31st FIGHTER WING HISTORY

1 Oct 1991	The 31 st Tactical Fighter Wing was redesignated the 31 st Fighter Wing.
24 Aug 1992	Hurricane Andrew destroyed much of Homestead AFB and forced the wing to move the fighter squadrons to other bases.
Aug 1992 – Jun 1993	Personnel at Homestead AFB performed salvage and recovery operations from the damage caused by Hurricane Andrew.
Jul 1993	The Department of Defense announced that Homestead AFB would be closed. The USAF reassigned the wing's fighter squadrons to other units.
1 Apr 1994	The 31 st Fighter Wing transferred to United States Air Forces in Europe and activated at Aviano AB, Italy with two new fighter squadrons, the 510 th and the 555 th .
May 1994	The wing's, 555 th Fighter Squadron started air operations in support of Operation DENY FLIGHT.
Sep 1994	The 510 th Fighter Squadron commenced air operations in support of Operation DENY FLIGHT.
2 Jun 95	Captain Scott O'Grady, 555 th Fighter Squadron pilot, was shot down behind enemy lines during a Operation DENY FLIGHT mission.
8 Jun 95	The Marine Corps, 24 th Marine Expeditionary Unit, rescued Captain O'Grady who spent the last six days evading capture by the Serbs,
29 Aug – 21 Sep 95	Operation DELIBERATE FORCE commenced as the wing conducted airstrikes against Bosnian Serbs.
21 Sep 95	Operation DELIBERATE FORCE halted and Operation DENY FLIGHT resumed.
20 Dec 95	Operation DENY FLIGHT ended.
21 Dec 95	The 31 FW conducted Operation DECISIVE EDGE in an ongoing effort to maintain the security of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

31st FIGHTER WING HISTORY

20 Dec 96	Operation DECISIVE EDGE ended and the wing continued peacekeeping efforts in Bosnia with Operation DELIBERATE GUARD.
8 Sep 97	USAFE activated its first Air Expeditionary Wing at Aviano AB, Italy. The new Air Expeditionary Wing included both the 510 th and the 555 th Fighter Squadrons from the 31 FW.
13 Mar 98	The 31 st Fighter Wing received its fifth Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for service from 1 Apr 94 – 1 Apr 96. The wing earned the award for providing air support during Bosnian operations while bedding down a newly assigned wing and two fighter squadrons.
15 May 98	The wing participated in NATO Exercise DETERMINED FALCON. A total of 13 countries and 85 NATO aircraft provided a show of force to Serbian forces to stop the violence in Kosovo.
20 Jun 98	The 31st Fighter Wing's enforcement of the no-fly zone in Bosnia-Herzegovina continued with the ending of Operation DELIBERATE GUARD and the start of Operation DELIBERATE FORGE.
Oct – Dec 98	The wing flew simultaneous contingency operations in the Balkans and in Turkey supporting Operation NORTHERN WATCH.
27 Jan 99	The Air Force awarded the wing with its sixth Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for its missions flown over the skies of the Balkans from 2 April 1996 – 1 April 1998.
Feb 99	USAFE activated the 31 st Air Expeditionary Wing (AEW) under the 16 th Air and Space Expeditionary Task Force-NOBLE ANVIL. The 31 FW units were activated as “expeditionary in place.”
Feb- Mar 99	American and NATO units deployed to Aviano AB and built up a force of nearly 200 aircraft and 4,000 personnel.
24 Mar 99	In an attempt to stop ethnic cleansing, the 31 st AEW flew its first combat sorties in Kosovo in support of NATO Operation ALLIED FORCE.

31st FIGHTER WING HISTORY

27 May 99	The 555 th Fighter Squadron flew its 1,000 th combat sortie and the 510 th Fighter Squadron followed with its 1,000 th on 29 May.
10 June 99	The wing flew its final mission for ALLIED FORCE/NOBLE ANVIL.
11 Jun 99	The wing returned to flying operations for DELIBERATE FORGE.
31 Aug – 29 Sep 99	The Aviano AB runway closed for repairs and then reopened on time as the 510 th and the 555 th Fighter squadrons returned from a deployment from United States.
27 Dec 99	Aviano was named as a finalist for the Commander in Chiefs Installation Excellence Award.
21 Jan 00	Brigadier General Daniel J. Darnell assumed command of the 31 st Fighter Wing as Brigadier General Leaf was assigned to the Pentagon as the Director of Operational Requirements, Deputy Chief of Staff/Air and Space Operations.

LINEAGE

Established as 31st Fighter Wing	6 Nov 1947
Organized	20 Nov 1947
Redesignated: 31st Fighter-Bomber Wing	20 Jan 1950
31st Fighter-Escort Wing	16 Jul 1950
31st Strategic Fighter Wing	20 Jan 1953
31st Fighter-Bomber Wing	1 Apr 1957
31st Tactical Fighter Wing	1 Jul 1958
31st Tactical Training Wing	30 Mar 1981
31st Tactical Fighter Wing	1 Oct 1985
31st Fighter Wing	1 Oct 1991

ASSIGNMENTS

Ninth Air Force,	20 Nov 1947
Fourteenth Air Force,	1 Feb 1949
Second Air Force,	1 Jul 1950
40th Air Division,	14 Mar 1951 (attached to 39th Air Division [Defense], 10 Jul–11 Oct 1952 and 10 Nov 1953–12 Feb 1954)
Ninth Air Force,	1 Apr 1957
831st Air Division,	15 Mar 1959
Ninth Air Force,	1 Jun 1962 (attached to Air Force Atlantic Command, 24 Oct–9 Nov 1962 10 Nov–c. 30 Nov 1962)
1st Air Division Provisional,	1 Oct 1964
836th Air Division,	1 Jan 1965
834th Air Division,	1 Aug 1966 (attached to Seventh Air Force, 16–24 Dec 1966)
836th Air Division,	25 Dec 1966
Seventh Air Force,	15 Oct 1970
836th Air Division,	30 Jun 1971
Ninth Air Force,	1 Apr 1994– Present
Sixteenth Air Force,	

STATIONS

Turner Field (later, AFB), GA,	20 Nov 1947	
George AFB, CA,	15 Mar 1959	
Homestead AFB, FL,	31 May 1962 –	6 Dec 1966
Tuy Hoa AB, South Vietnam,	16 Dec 1966 –	15 Oct 1970
Homestead AFB, FL,	15 Oct 1970 –	1 Apr 1994
Aviano AB, Italy,	1 Apr 1994 –	Present

31ST FIGHTER WING COMMANDERS

Colonel William L. Lee	20 Nov 47	–	16 Aug 48
Colonel Eugene H. Snively	16 Aug 48	–	26 Dec 50
Colonel Alvan C. Gillem II	26 Dec 50	–	10 Mar 51
Colonel Eugene H. Snively	10 Mar 51	–	14 Mar 51
Colonel Carl W. Stapleton	14 Mar 51	–	09 Apr 51
Lieutenant Colonel Charles W. Lenfrost	09 Apr 51	–	01 May 51
Colonel David C. Schilling	01 May 51	–	27 May 51
Lieutenant Colonel Charles W. Lenfrost	27 May 51	–	22 Jun 51
Lieutenant Colonel William D. Dunham	22 Jun 51	–	01 Jul 51
Lieutenant Colonel Gerald W. Johnson	01 Jul 51	–	20 Jul 51
Colonel David C. Schilling	20 Jul 51	–	16 May 55
Colonel Robert P. Montgomery	16 May 55	–	15 Jul 55
Colonel Gordon M. Graham	15 Jul 55	–	1 Aug 55
Colonel Hubert Zemke	1 Aug 55	–	13 Oct 55
Colonel Gordon M. Graham	13 Oct 55	–	Feb 59
Lieutenant Colonel Harold L. Williams	Feb 59	–	15 Mar 59
Colonel Robert W. Stevens	15 Mar 59	–	26 Aug 59
Colonel Herbert E. Ross	26 Aug 59	–	5 Oct 59
Colonel William D. Ritchie	5 Oct 59	–	2 Oct 61
Colonel Jack R. Brown	2 Oct 61	–	14 Oct 61
Colonel Frank J. Collins	14 Oct 61	–	9 Mar 64
Colonel William E. Bethea	9 Mar 64	–	16 Mar 64
Colonel Franklin A. Nichols	16 Mar 64	–	30 May 65
Colonel Earnest T. Burnett	30 May 65	–	17 Jun 65
Colonel James Jabara	17 Jun 65	–	17 Nov 66
Colonel Raymond C. Lee, Jr.	17 Nov 66	–	28 Nov 66
Colonel Warren R. Lewis	28 Nov 66	–	7 Dec 67
Colonel William J. Evans	7 Dec 67	–	3 May 68
Colonel Abner M. Aust	3 May 68	–	8 Feb 69
Colonel Cuthbert A. Pattillo	8 Feb 69	–	8 Aug 69
Colonel William B. Yancey, Jr.	8 Aug 69	–	15 Jun 70
Colonel Gilbert D. Hereth	15 Jun 70	–	15 Oct 70
Brigadier General Wiltz P. Segura	15 Oct 70	–	28 May 71
Colonel David E. Rippetoe, Jr.	28 May 71	–	16 Jun 72
Colonel Alonzo J. Walter, Jr.	16 Jun 72	–	1 Mar 74
Colonel Dudley J. Foster	1 Mar 74	–	7 Mar 75
Colonel Walter J. Bacon II	7 Mar 75	–	14 Jun 76
Colonel Samuel R. Johnson	14 Jun 76	–	31 Aug 78
Colonel William A. Gorton	31 Aug 78	–	2 Jan 80
Colonel Eugene H. Fischer	2 Jan 80	–	5 Jan 82
Colonel Robert H. Baxter	5 Jan 82	–	20 Jun 84
Colonel Billy G. McCoy	20 Jun 84	–	27 Jun 85
Colonel Charles L. Hehn	27 Jun 85	–	5 Sep 86

31st FIGHTER WING COMMANDERS (CON'T)

Colonel Hiram H. Burr, Jr.	5 Sep 86	-	28 Apr 88
Colonel Walter T. West	28 Apr 88	-	1 Aug 91
Colonel Stephen B. Plummer	1 Aug 91	-	6 Nov 92
Colonel William T. Rudd	6 Nov 92	-	28 Jun 93
Colonel Rodney L. Bates	28 Jun 93	-	1 Apr 94
Colonel John H. Campbell	1 Apr 94	-	24 May 95
Brigadier General Charles F. Wald	24 May 95	-	3 Jul 97
Brigadier General Timothy A. Peppe	3 Jul 97	-	30 Nov 98
Brigadier General Daniel P. Leaf	30 Nov 98	-	21 Jan 00
Brigadier General Daniel J. Darnell *	21 Jan 00	-	Present

*Frocked to BG on 13 Mar 00

31st FIGHTER WING AIRCRAFT FLOWN

P (later, F)-51	1947 – 1949
F-84	1948 – 1950, 1951 – 1957
KB-29	1954, 1956 – 1957
F-100	1957 – 1959, 1959 – 1970
KB-50	1957 – 1958
F-4	1970 – 1988
F-16	1985 – Present

NORTH AMERICAN P/F-51D
MUSTANG
1947 – 1949



Providing high altitude escort to B-17s and B-24s during World War II, the *Mustang* scored heavily over German interceptors, and by the end of the war, the P-51s destroyed over 4,950 enemy aircraft in the air, more than any other Army Air Force fighter in Europe. The F-51 (a redesigned P-51) achieved status as the first USAF fighter to participate in the Korean War. The *Mustang* measured 32 feet three inches long, 13 feet eight inches high, and weighed 11,600 pounds. Equipped with six 50-caliber machine guns, the \$54,000 P/F-51D attained a maximum speed of 379 MPH, a range of 826 nautical miles, and a top ceiling 41,900 feet.

REPUBLIC F-84C/E/G
THUNDERJET
1948 – 1950 AND 1951 – 1957



The *Thunderjet* earned distinction as the USAF first post WWII fighter and the first single-seat fighter-bomber with nuclear capability. The F-84 gained its reputation during the Korean War where it performed low level interdiction missions. The *Thunderjet* displayed a wingspan of 36 feet five inches, a height of 12 feet one inch, a length of 38 feet six inches, and a weight of 15,227 pounds. The \$212,000 *Thunderjet* reached a top speed of 620 MPH with a range of 1,485 miles and a top ceiling of 43,240 feet.

NORTH AMERICAN F-100
SUPER SABRE
1957 – 1959 AND 1959 – 1970



The F-100 achieved distinction as the world's first production aircraft capable of flying faster than the speed of sound. The *Super Sabre* made its combat debut in Vietnam where it performed a fighter-bomber role in ground support missions. The F-100 measured 54 feet two inches long, 16 feet two inches high, and weighed 38,048 pounds. The \$704,000 *Super Sabre* reached a top speed of 926.6 MPH and reached a cruising range of 1,970 miles.

MCDONNELL-DOUGLAS F-4
PHANTOM
1970 – 1988



The USAF's F-4 *Phantom II*, made its first flight on May 27, 1963. In its air-to-ground role, the F-4 carried twice the normal bomb load of a WW II B-17. In 1965, the first USAF *Phantom IIs* were sent to Southeast Asia (SEA). The first USAF pilot to score four combat victories with F-4s in SEA was then-Col. Robin Olds, a WW II ace. The F-4 measured 16 feet six inches high, 58 feet two inches long, with a wing span of 38 feet five inches. Each *Phantom* cost \$1,900,000 each and attained a top speed of 1,400 MPH with a cruising range of 1,750 miles.

GENERAL DYNAMICS F-16
FIGHTING FALCON
1985 – PRESENT



The F-16 *Fighting Falcon* remained one of the US Air Force's premier front-line jet fighter aircraft. Since its introduction in 1976, the F-16 continued its role as a true multirole fighter. Its highly maneuverable design has proven itself in air-to-air combat and air-to-ground attack. The F-16 can fly more than 500 miles (860 kilometers), deliver its weapons with superior accuracy, defend itself against enemy aircraft, and return to its starting point. In its present form, the F-16 remained one of the most potent air-to-air combat fighters ever flown. The *Fighting Falcon* measured 49 feet six inches long, 16 feet six inches high, with a wing span of 32 feet 10 inches. The \$8,200,000 F-16 weighed 29,896 pounds fully loaded, reached a maximum speed of 1,345 MPH, and achieved a maximum range 1,407 miles.

HONORS

Service Streamers.

None.

Campaign Streamers.

Vietnam: Vietnam Air Offensive
Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase II
Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase III
Vietnam Air/Ground
Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase IV
TET 69/ Counteroffensive
Vietnam Summer–Fall, 1969
Vietnam Winter–Spring, 1970
Sanctuary Counteroffensive
Southwest Monsoon.

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers.

None.

Decorations.

Presidential Unit Citation: Vietnam,	1 May – 31 Dec 1968
Air Force Outstanding Unit Award: with Combat "V" Device	17 Dec 1966 – 30 Apr 1968.
Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards:	4 – 16 Jul 1952 1 Mar – 30 Nov 1962 1 Jun – 16 Dec 1966 1 Apr 1994 – 1 Apr 1996 2 Apr 1996 – 1 Apr 1998
Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Crosses with Palm:	17 Dec 1966 – 31 Oct 1970 1 Jan 1968 – 19 May 1969.

BESTOWED HONORS

The United States Air Force authorized the 31st Fighter Wing to display honors earned by the 31st Operations Group prior to 20 Nov 1947.

Service Streamers.

None.

Campaign Streamers.

World War II: Algeria-French Morocco, with Arrowhead
Tunisia
Sicily
Naples-Foggia
Anzio
Rome-Arno
Southern France
North Apennines
Po Valley
Air Offensive, Europe
Normandy
Northern France
Rhineland
Central Europe
Air Combat, EAME Theater.

Decorations.

Distinguished Unit Citations:	Rumania	21 Apr 1944
	Poland	25 Jul 1944.